HE SHADOWS

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IN THE SHADOWS

BY

E. PAULINE JOHNSON

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IN THE SHADOWS

I AM sailing to the leeward,
Where the current runs to seaward
    Soft and slow.
Where the sleeping river grasses
Brush my paddle as it passes
    To and fro.

On the shore the heat is shaking
All the golden sands awaking
    In the cove ;
And the quaint sand-piper, winging
O'er the shallows, ceases singing
    When I move.

On the water's idle pillow
Sleeps the overhanging willow,
Green and cool;
Where the rushes lift their burnished
Oval heads from out the tarnished
Emerald pool.

Where the very silence slumbers,
Water lilies grow in numbers,
Pure and pale ;
All the morning they have rested,
Amber crowned, and pearly crested,
Fair and frail.

Here, impossible romances,
Indefinable sweet fancies,
Cluster round ;
But they do not mar the sweetness
Of this still September fleetness
With a sound.

I can scarce discern the meeting
Of the shore and stream retreating,
So remote ;
For the laggard river, dozing,
Only wakes from its reposing
Where I float.

Where the river mists are rising,
All the foliage baptizing
With their spray ;
There the sun gleams far and faintly,
With a shadow soft and saintly,
In its ray.

And the perfume of some burning
Far-off brushwood, ever turning
To exale
All its smoky fragrance dying,
In the arms of evening lying,
Where I sail.

My canoe is growing lazy,
In the atmosphere so hazy,
While I dream ;
Half in slumber I am guiding,
Eastward indistinctly gliding
Down the stream.

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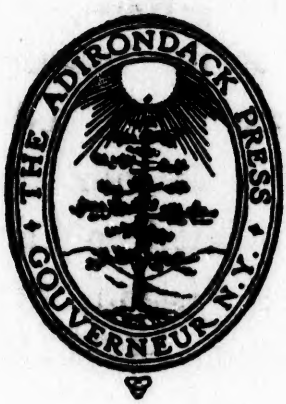
"In the Shadows" is taken from *The White Wampum*, a book of verses by E. Pauline Johnson, published in London by John Lane, Boston: Lamson, Wolffe & Co., and Toronto: The Copp Clark Co., 1895. Now privately reprinted, in an edition of two hundred copies, for Laurence C. Woodworth and his friends at the nineteenth annual meet of the American Canoe Association, Stave Island, St. Lawrence River, August, MDCCCXCVIII.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